

Research Note

Repair Practices in a Cross-linguistic Dyad in Japanese between a Native Speaker of Japanese and a Native Speaker of English

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**Key words:**

会話分析、自己修復、異言語話者による会話、日本語母語話者、英語母語話者
Conversation Analysis, Self-repair, Cross-linguistic talk, JNS, ENS

Abstract

These research notes explore the use of a Conversation Analysis (CA) framework to investigate how participants manage cross-linguistic talk. The data is a Japanese conversation between a Japanese native speaker (JNS) and an English native speaker (ENS).

The study observes how the participants co-constructed their talk, both verbally and non-verbally, with a specific focus on other-initiated self-repair. It was observed that the participants used self-repairs and nods to ensure the smooth communication. The results indicate that CA is an effective means of analyzing cross-linguistic interaction.

1. Introduction

These research notes explore the use of a Conversation Analysis (CA) framework to examine how speakers managed cross-linguistic talk; in this case, in Japanese, between a Japanese native speaker (JNS) and an English native speaker (ENS). Cross-linguistic interaction is considered a social activity in which the speakers manage the conversation and constitute their identities (Gardner & Wagner, 2004; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Kasper, 2009; Kasper & Wagner, 2014). By focusing on the interaction from a co-constructional perspective, this paper aims to highlight the accomplishment of cross-linguistic communication through the use of appropriate repair practices, and to explore how and when the speakers alternate their language (i.e., code-switching) to repair utterances.

Initially, the applicability of CA to L2 discourse was questioned (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Gass et al., 1998; Wagner, 1996). However, as the socio-cultural aspects of language learning became more important and there was a need to more closely examine learner talk-in-interaction, a more discourse-oriented analysis is now more common when describing L2 discourse. CA has therefore been increasingly applied in SLA research (e.g., Gardner & Wagner, 2004; Kasper, 2009; Markee, 2000; Schegloff et al., 2002; Seedhouse, 2004), with an increasing number of researchers used video-recorded data to more precisely observe the ongoing interactions between NS and NNS, so as to explore its discursiveness and co-construction at each conversational move.

The concept of repair practices in talk-in-interaction was coined by Schegloff et al. (1977). To “repair” is to attempt to deal with problems within a conversation and is vital for the maintenance of the relationship between the speakers. The objective of repair is known as a trouble source; that is, a word, phrase, or utterance that is regarded as a problem by one or both speakers. A repair completed by the speaker of the trouble-source is called self-repair while a repair made by the hearer of the trouble-source is called other-repair. Repair initiation is the moment which signals a trouble-source. There are four types of repair: self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, and other-initiated other-repair (Schegloff et al., 1977). With a specific focus on other-initiated self-repair, the present study aims to explore how the speakers both verbally and non-verbally co-constructed their conversation.

Other-initiated self-repair is often seen in a language class room (Seedhouse, 2004). A common trouble-solving tool for language educators (Seedhouse, 2004) is using the learners’ L1 when the learners have problems understanding the target language. These practices have been found more often at the introductory level and there has been significant research examining the ways learners scaffold the target language (Markee,

2000; Mori, 2010; Seedhouse, 2004).

Code-switching has been a major focus in studies on cross-linguistic talk as it has been seen to be closely related to the speaker's identity (Auer, 2005; 2009). Starting with Auer's seminal work (1984), bilingual studies have explored speakers' code-switching by focusing on both the management of the talk-in-interaction and on the display of social identity (Auer, 1984, 2005, 2009; Gafaranga, 2012; Greer, 2013). Recently, Greer (2013) examined code-switching and embodied practices in bilingual interactions and found that the speakers' embodied practices triggered or signaled the code-switching. However, little CA research has focused on NS/NNS code-switching in cross-linguistic conversation other than in educational settings (Bae & Oh, 2013; Hosoda, 2000, 2006, 2008; Park, 2007). The present paper seeks to examine code-switching perspectives and repair practices using the CA framework to observe the use of particular language to reduce problems in face-to-face interaction.

2. Data collection

The data consisted of 15 minutes of conversation in Japanese between an ENS and JNS in an Australian university. The speakers took part in the study voluntarily. The JNS participant was a Master's student at an Australian university. The ENS participant was an undergraduate student enrolled in an advanced Japanese course at the same Australian university. The ENS participant had also spent a year in a Japanese secondary school and had lived in a homestay with a Japanese family prior to the data collection. The conversation partners did not know each other prior to the time of data collection. The researcher gave them an initial topic ("Talk about your travel experience") to facilitate conversation but there were no constraints on the topic. The researcher did not observe the conversation partners during the conversation which was audio and video recorded. The participants were asked to conduct the conversation in Japanese.

3. Results

3.1. Clearing the trouble source

The results showed that the repair practices contingently emerged from the JNS interlocutor, Kaori¹⁾. The repairs were triggered when there were pauses, repetitions or direct questions from the ENS interlocutor, Jane. It was observed that Kaori generally replaced trouble-source terms either with an English term or with a Japanese synonym.

Excerpt 1 demonstrates that Jane does not understand the Japanese word "*gakubusei*" (undergraduate student). In Line 8, Jane utters "*hai, gakubusei*" (yes, undergraduate

student) with a rising intonation, overlapping Kaori's turn. Kaori's word "*gakubusei*" is thus a 'trouble source' in this sequence. Jane's repetition of the word triggers Kaori's self-repair "*Daigaku no gakubu*" (undergraduate of university) in Lines 9 and 11 which facilitates Jane's understanding.

Excerpt 1. Undergraduate (K: Kaori, J: Jane, ENS)

1. K: oosutoraria wa: ↑ kyonen hajimete kite: (.)
Australia TOP last year first time come TE
I came to Australia for the first time last year and...
2. J: (nods)
3. K: °de°: kyonen wa: kookan ryuugakusei de kite:
P last year TOP exchange student P come TE
I came (here) as an exchange student and...
4. J: (nods)
5. K: de nanka honto wa: saisho kanada ni ikitakute:
P well truth TOP at first Canada P go want TE
And well, to be honest, I wanted to go to Canada first...
6. J: a: (nods)
7. → K: nandekatte yuuto: gakubusei no toki ni [kanada ni ittete
Why-P (casual) saying P undergraduate student P time P Canada P go TE
The reason is that I went to Canada when I was an undergraduate student...
8. → J:
[hai ↑ gakubusei?
yes ↑ *gakubusei*?
What's gakubusei?
9. → K: daigaku =
University
University
10. J: =a: (nods)
11. → K: no: gakubu ↑
P department
of department
12. J: (nods)
13. K: kyonen wa moo: ano, masutaa dattakara:
last-year TOP already uhm master PAST because
(I was) already a master's student last year.
14. J: (nods)
15. → K: andaa gurajueeto no toki ni kanada ni ittetakara:

undergraduate P time P Canada P go PAST because
I was in Canada when I was an undergraduate student.

As can be seen from the excerpt, Jane's utterance in Line 8 initiated Kaori's repair (Lines 9 to 11). In addition, in Line 15, Kaori switches from her original use of "*gakubusei*" and instead uses a *katakana* word "*andaa gurajueeto*" (undergraduate) which allowed for a smoother conversation between the speakers.

Replacing a Japanese word with an English word was a common repair made by Kaori. Excerpt 2 similarly shows Kaori repairing a Japanese utterance, "*shuushokukatsudoo*," with "job-hunting" in English.

Excerpt 2. Job hunting

1. K: demo soko ni modotchau to(.) nihon ni kaette kuru tsumori yatta kara:=
 but there P return-AUX P Japan P return TE come plan PAST because
but I would go back (to Canada) (.) I planned to go back to Japan then.
2. J: (nods)
3. → K: =>ichinenkan de<kaettekuru to shuushokukatsudoo ni manawanakatta no
 one year P return TE come P job hunting P be in time NEG PAST P
If I went back to (Japan) in a year, I would not be in time for the job hunting (period).
4. K: [nanka shuushoku]
 Well job
Well, job
5. → J: [whew:: ((puzzled face)) .hha]
 Whew...
Whew...
6. → J: gomen (.) imi wa nan desu ka?
 sorry meaning SB what COP Q
Sorry, what's the meaning?
7. → K: J:ob hunting ↑
Job hunting?
8. J: a (.) soo (nods)
 uh right
uh right (nods)
9. → K: un(.) nanka (.) jo:b hunting shinai to ikenai kara: ↑
 yeah well job hunting do NEG P must so
yeah, well, (I must) do job hunting so...
10. J: (nods)

11. K: kou (.)
well
well
12. J: (nods)
13. K: nanka(.)
well
well
14. J: (nods)
15. K: minna ga sutaato suru jiki ni=
everyone SB start do period P
The period when everyone starts (job-hunting)
16. J: (nods)
17. K: =watashi wa mada: kanada ni irukoto ni narukara: (.) furi ni naru to omotte(.)
I SB yet Canada P existence P become so disadvantage P become P think TE
I (would have) still (been) in Canada then, so I thought it would be a disadvantage.
18. J: (nods)
19. K: dakara oosutoraria dato=
so Australia COND
so if it is Australia,
20. J: (nods)
21. K: =oosutoraria tte nigatsu ni hajimaru yan >jugyoo ga< (.)
Australia P February P star P class SB
(The semester) starts in February in Australia, right?
22. J: (nods)
23. K: demo kanada tte kugatsu kara: jugyoo ga =
but Canada P September from class SB
but it starts in September in Canada
24. J: =a:soo (nods)
I see.
25. K: zureteru kara ne
being a gap P FP
There is a gap.
26. J: u:n (nods)
yeah
yeah (nods)
27. K: de: choodo oosutoraria no hoo ga ii to omotte(.)
then just right Australia P comparative SB good P think TE

So I thought Australia was better (than Canada).

28. J: (nods)

In Line 5, Jane overlaps Kaori's turn by inserting "Whew... hha" (aspirated) and her facial expression implied that she did not understand Kaori's turn. Jane takes her turn and utters "*gomen imi wa nandesuka*" (Sorry, what's the meaning?) which triggers Kaori's self-repair utterance. Rather than using a different Japanese word or giving an explanation, Kaori directly translates "*shuushoku katsudoo*," into the English "job-hunting." "*Shuushoku katsudoo*" may be a relatively unknown term for Japanese language learners and Kaori may have wanted to continue to describe her study abroad and job-hunting experiences. Quickly replacing the trouble-source allowed her to continue the conversation.

In Excerpt 3, Kaori replaces a whole Japanese sentence with English when Jane has a problem understanding the Japanese.

Excerpt 3. Did you grow up there?

1. → K: *e?* jaa Jane-chan wa zutto soko de sodatta no?

Huh? then Jane SB long time there P grow PAST FP

Huh? Then did you grow up there?

2. → J: (.) nani?

what?

what?

3. → K: soko de sodattano?

there P grow PAST FP

Did you grow up there?

4. → J: (.)

5. → K: <Were you(.) grown up there?>

Were you grown up there?[sic]

6. → J: >a hai<

uh yes

uh yes

7. K: fu:n (nods)

hmm

hmm (nods)

When, in Line 1, Kaori utters "*soko de sodatta no?*" (Did you grow up there?), Jane's micro-pause and utterance "*nani*" (what?) in Line 2 signals that she does not understand. Kaori repeats her utterance "*soko de sodatta no*" but Jane's next micro pause in Line 4 shows

that the trouble source has not been cleared, which triggers Kaori's English translation so as to continue the conversation.

3. 2. Failing to clear the trouble source

Speakers, however, cannot always clear a trouble source if they are unable to find the orientation. Excerpt 4 demonstrates that the speakers were unable to clear the trouble-source. In Line 7, Jane self-repairs her English utterance "dry" to "drought" with a rising intonation, indicating that she would like to confirm whether Kaori understands "drought." Kaori shows her understanding, by nodding and by expanding the sequence, uttering "*mizu seigen ni naru ne*" (There are going to be water restrictions).

Jane's repetition of the word "*mizu seigen*" in Line 9 signals her problem understanding the term. Kaori replies with a backchannel, "*un*," and multiple nods which indicate that she is not oriented toward giving an explanation or clarification. Jane opens a new turn by uttering "drought" in order to confirm whether "*mizu seigen*" is the word for "drought" in Japanese (Line 11). However, Kaori's backchannel, "*un*" (Line 12), forces Jane to continue, which she acknowledges by also uttering "*un*" (Line 13). Here Jane appears to have given up on receiving any confirmation from Kaori regarding the meaning of "*mizu seigen*." She elaborates by explaining where her family lives to continue the conversation in Line 17. It is also possible here that Kaori does not know the English translation of "*mizu seigen*." This interaction indicates that a repair initiation (by Jane in Lines 7, 9 and 11) does not always give rise to a successful repair.

Excerpt 4. Drought

1. J: demo: kotoshi:
but this year
But this year
2. K: (nods)
3. J: e:: a: ame ga furimasen deshita [kara]
uhm rain SB drop NEG PAST so
uhm, there was no rain this year
4. K: [u::n]
yeah
5. J: tabun kono natsu ni (.)
maybe this summer P
Maybe this summer,
6. K: (nods)
7. → J: very dry (.) e:to drought?

- very dry *uhm drought?*
8. → K: u:n (nods) miz- mizu seigen naru ne
 yeah wat-, water restriction become FP
 yeah, there are going to be water restrictions.
9. → J: .h mizu seigen?
 mizu seigen?
10. → K: un (nods)
 yeah
11. → J: drought [water]
12. → K: [un] un (nods)
 yeah yeah
13. → J: un (.) la:ike:
 yeah like
14. → K: u:n
 yeah
15. J: (.) atashi
 I
16. K: (nods)
17. → J: etto:: atashi no kazoku wa(.) etto: inaka ni sundeimasu
 well, I P family SB well country P live
 well, my family live in the countryside

3. 3. Fluctuating between Japanese and English

In the present study, the trouble sources were mainly in Kaori's Japanese utterances. When Jane's silence and facial expressions signaled she was having trouble understanding, Kaori often repaired her utterances in English. Although Kaori made self-repairs in English, Jane tried as much as she could to produce utterances in Japanese in the previously examined conversations. However, Kaori's alternation between Japanese and English triggered Jane's use of English in the following conversations. Excerpt 5 is an example of Jane's language alternation.

Excerpt 5. Requirement

1. → K: e ikura in no deipuroma (.) edeyukeeshon no deipuroma ni hairu to shitara
 uh how much need P diploma education P diploma P enter P do COND
 Uh, how many (points) do you need to enter the Diploma in Education course?
2. → J: (1.0)
3. → K: what's the requirement [of]

4. → J: [there's] there's (.) no such a requi[rement]
5. → K: [a:]
6. → J: soshite:: (1.0) [juu-]
 and juu (not complete)
and juu (untranslatable)
7. → K: [no such a] requirement
8. → J: yeah (.) rainen no: (.)
 next year P
yeah, next year
9. K: (nods)
10. → J: until next year
11. K: un (nod)
12. → J: etto: (.) when everyone applies ↑
 well
13. K: un (nods)
14. → J: and then I suppose they rank you (.) ja: uh: you kno:w
 well
15. K: e:: ↑
oh
16. → J: take a <top> peoples
17. K: really?
18. → J: hai hai doozo: >like< (.) if you are too low
 yes yes please
yes, please, like...if you are too low
19. K: (nods)
20. → J: gomen .haha
Sorry (laughs)
21. K: e:
oh
22. → J: un demo soo (.) I think it depends on the area as well >mochiron<
yeah, but so, I think it depends on the area as well, of course.
23. K: (nods)

The excerpt begins with Kaori's question regarding the requirements for a graduate diploma course in Education at the speakers' university (Line 1). Corresponding to Jane's pause in Line 2, her utterance was repaired in English (Line 3). In the middle of Kaori's self-repair, Jane's utterance overlaps and interrupts Kaori's turn which indicates Jane's

partial understanding of Kaori's initial question in Japanese (Lines 4 and 5). Jane attempts to produce her utterance in Japanese in Line 6 and Line 8, however, Kaori's insertion of the English utterance "no such requirement" (Line 7) triggers Jane's alternation from Japanese to English (Line 10). Acknowledged by Kaori's backchannel in Line 11, Jane constructs her turn in English in Lines 12, 14 and 16. She explains that top students could get in to the course while low-scoring students would be rejected by quickly alternating between Japanese and English (Lines 18 to 22). Her limited use of Japanese and inserted Japanese utterances were produced using gestures (Lines 18 to 22). She appears to choose English so as to clearly explain the topic, and also because she believes that her Japanese skill is not competent. However, the contingent insertions of short Japanese utterances such as "*doozo*," "*gomen*" and "*mochiron*" demonstrate Jane's fluctuating orientation towards the use of target language and the talk-in interaction in Japanese.

4. Discussion

The examples showed that the JNS, Kaori, generally used repairs to facilitate her partner's understanding of the conversation in this cross-linguistic dyad. In contrast to Kurhila (2001), which demonstrated frequent NS other-repairs, Kaori rarely corrected Jane's utterances. In the present study, Kaori did not appear to orient to the trouble source unless Jane displayed explicit misunderstanding by asking directly for clarification or using a rising tone with repetition, which supported the findings of Hosoda (2006), who found that the NSs preferred less orientation towards their language expertise. However, even so, as can be seen from Excerpt 4, repair initiation does not always work.

The JNS, Kaori, mostly used Japanese probably because she was asked to do so before the data collection by the researcher. Also, it may have been because Kaori was a Master's degree student and thought it was good for Jane. Interestingly, however, the choice of language fluctuated in the latter part of the conversation. As presented in Excerpt 5, Jane sometimes used English and contingently alternated with Japanese. The conversational exchanges were less static and stable as the interaction was code-alternated. Jane produced English utterances and Kaori returned them using Japanese backchannels "*un*" or "*un un*." The results showed that they dynamically co-constructed the discourse in their unique sequential organization. The emergence of NS self-repairs and speaker language choice could be related to their perception of their identities in the NS/NNS interaction. More detailed studies could explore this aspect further.

The results also indicated that the speakers were basically oriented toward continuing the sequence and preferred to avoid interrupting the discourse flow. While this tendency for an "on-going" conversation was potential for misunderstanding, it also implied that

both speakers equally respected their conversation partner despite the differences in language expertise. These results echoed previous research and supported claims for the co-constructed nature of NS and NNS discourse (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Hauser, 2003; Hellermann, 2011; Wong, 2000; Wong & Waring, 2010).

Speakers construct a relationship through their conversation. Even if they are NNS and NS with the NNS being a learner of the conversation language, they do not normally orient the conversation towards "language learning." Therefore, as Gardner and Wagner (2004) noted, NS do not normally correct their NNS partners' L2 utterances. Similarly, Hosoda (2006) noted that a higher level of language expertise does not necessarily result in repair practices that "teach" an NNS conversation partner. In other words, NS's other-repair practices are not inevitable (Hosoda, 2006) and speakers only orient toward either "expertise" or "non-expertise" if the trouble-source seriously affects conversation continuation. The findings in this present study support Gardner and Wagner (2004) as the NS-NNS repairs were made in very contingent ways.

Other prominent features of the exchange were the gestures. In particular, the nods made by both speakers ensured a smooth conversation flow. The speakers' facial expressions and gestures were important in the construction of the cross-linguistic conversation and highlighted the importance of both audio and video recordings as data sources when examining intricate cross-linguistic conversation structures.

5. Conclusion

These research notes explored NS /NNS repair practices in cross-linguistic discourse. It was found that the NS used repair as a resource to enable smooth communication and drew on the NNS partner's L1 (i.e., English in the present research). It was also observed that the NS's self-repairs in English triggered the NNS's language alternation from the target language to L1.

The presented examples showed that the speakers' language alternation between L1 and L2 considerably affected the sequential organization of the cross-linguistic conversation and that the NS's self-repairs in English triggered the NNS's language alternation. The fluctuating language choices between L1 and L2 could have been related to the speakers' perceptions of their social identities (Park, 2007). Further studies could explore how speakers co-construct their NS or NNS identities through discursive conversational practices in cross-linguistic interactions.

As second/foreign language exposure spreads, more micro-analyses of cross-linguistic conversations are needed to fully understand how speakers create communication. CA is an effective means of analyzing such cross-linguistic discourse; however, although

numerous studies exist which use CA to examine non-classroom cross-linguistic interactions in English, only a few studies have used CA to examine cross-linguistic interactions in Japanese outside the classroom (Kwon, 2009). These notes contribute in a small way to that literature.

Further studies could explore how speakers elaborate their conversation in Japanese when they are both NNS, such as speakers of Mandarin, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, or Vietnamese. Increasing numbers of these speakers are arriving in Japan and effective cross-linguistic communication is vital for both JNS and NNS. It would also be useful to investigate the ways in which the first language and the language of conversation affect discourse construction. The researcher hopes this paper can promote discussion on the use of CA in understanding code-switching and repair practices in cross-linguistic conversations.

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Note

- 1) Participants' names are pseudonyms. See Appendix for transcription conventions and abbreviations used in the Japanese transcripts.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions (based on Ten Have 2007)

Regarding the romanization of Japanese transcriptions, this paper uses the Hepburn system guided by Nishizaka (2008).

.hh in-breath or inhalation

↑ rising intonation

↓ falling intonation

[] overlapped speech in contiguous lines

[A single left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset

] A single right bracket indicates the point at which an utterance or utterance-part terminates

= Equal signs, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of the next line, indicate no 'gap' between the two lines

(0.7) Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence by tenths of seconds

(.) unmeasured micropause

Underlining highlights parts produced in a louder or more emphatic tone than surrounding conversation

:: sound stretch

- cut-off

, continuing intonation

? rising intonation

>WORD< quicker speech

<WORD> slowed speech

°WORD° quiet speech

() commentary by transcriptionist

→ points out a phenomenon under scrutiny

Abbreviations in the Japanese transcripts (based on Morita 2005 and Shibatani 1990)

AUX auxiliary

COND conditional

COP copula

FP final particle

NEG negation

P particle

PAST past tense

Q question marker

SB subject marker

TE -te (conjunctive) form

TOP topic marker